

## Elena Hilby

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**From:** Dreier, Denny - DOT <Denny.Dreier@dot.wi.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 01, 2016 2:55 PM  
**To:** Elena Hilby  
**Cc:** Dreier, Denny - DOT  
**Subject:** Re: WisDOT on-premise, electronic and LED signing criteria  
**Attachments:** On-Premise and Electronic Letter - CURRENT (1).doc

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

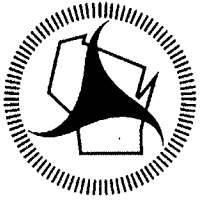
Good afternoon Elena,

It was a pleasure talking with you today. As we discussed, attached is the information regarding the parameters that need to be met for signing that is along or can be seen from a state controlled highway ( in this case STH 59).

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. Thank you and have a nice day.

Sincerely,

Denny Dreier,  
Outdoor Advertising Program Regional Coordinator  
Division of Transportation System Development  
Southwest Region - Madison  
2101 Wright Street  
Madison, WI 53704-2583  
608-246-7906  
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## Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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March 1, 2016

Southwest Region – Madison Office  
Outdoor Advertising Unit  
2101 Wright Street  
Madison, WI 53704-2583  
Telephone (608) 246-7906  
FAX (608) 246-5383

Thank you for your interest in outdoor advertising. The following information outlines the parameters that need to be met in order for proposed signs to be considered on-premise signs.

Re: On-Premise signing

The State of Wisconsin does not require a permit for On-Premise Outdoor Advertising signs that may be read from state controlled highways provided the following conditions are met;

- 1) The entire sign, all parts including overhang and landscaping are in their entirety on the business property itself and no portion can encroach onto state owned right-of-way.
- 2) The size of the sign cannot be larger than 1,200 sq ft per direction of travel.
- 3) The sign cannot be a safety hazard, it must not impede adequate vision lines for all traffic on the state highway as well as all side roads and all access points that serve this business. Safety is paramount and must be considered for any and all sign placement.
- 4) The sign must be within 50 feet of the business (business is defined as the building or the parking lot that serves that building/business or the driveway that leads to the parking lot of the same).
- 5) The sign must be outside any setbacks, again this includes all sign parts and landscaping.
- 6) The advertising on this sign can only be for that business alone. No Off-Premise advertising is allowed.

Please note: Whether or not a permit is issued by the Department does not relieve the applicant from obtaining all other permits required by law from any other state or federal agency, county, or municipality.

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Re: Electronic/Lighted/Multiple Message/LED signing

The State of Wisconsin carefully regulates how lighted signs are to be displayed when they can be viewed from state controlled highways.

State Statute 84.30(4)(b) & (bm) reads:

**(b)** Signs may be illuminated, subject to the following restrictions:

1. Signs which contain, include, or are illuminated by any flashing, intermittent, or moving light or lights are prohibited, except those specified in par. (bm) and those giving public service information such as time, date, temperature, weather, or similar information.
2. Signs which are not effectively shielded as to prevent beams or rays of light from being directed at any portion of the traveled ways of the interstate or federal-aid primary highway and which are of such intensity or brilliance as to cause glare or to impair the vision of the driver of any motor vehicle, or which otherwise interfere with any driver's operation of a motor vehicle are prohibited.
3. No sign shall be so illuminated that it interferes with the effectiveness of, or obscures an official traffic sign, device, or signal.

(bm) Signs may contain multiple or variable messages, including messages on louvers that are rotated and messages formed solely by use of lights or other electronic or digital displays, that may be changed by any electronic process, subject to all of the following restrictions:

1. Each change of message shall be accomplished in one second or less.
  2. Each message shall remain in a fixed position for at least 6 seconds.
  3. The use of traveling messages or segmented messages is prohibited.
  4. The department, by rule, may prohibit or establish restrictions on the illumination of messages to a degree of brightness that is greater than necessary for adequate visibility.
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Wisconsin Administrative Code Trans 201.15 reads:

**Trans 201.15 Electronic signs.**

(1) PURPOSE. The purpose of this section is to set standards for the use of signs whose messages may be changed by electronic process in accordance with 23 USC 131 (c) (3) and (j), and ss. 84.30 (3) (c) and (4) (b), Stats.

(2) DEFINITIONS. In this section:

(a) "Activities conducted on the property on which the signs are located" has the meaning provided in s. Trans 201.19 (2).

(b) "Message" means anything displayed on a sign, including copy, art animations and graphics.

(c) "Multiple message sign" means an outdoor advertising sign, display or device whose messages are on triangular louvered facings and are changed by electronic rotation of the louvers.

(d) "Public service information" means a message on an electronic sign which provides the time, date, temperature, weather, or information concerning civic, charitable or other noncommercial activities.

(e) "Segmented message" means any message or distinct subunit of a message presented by means of at least one display change on a variable message sign.

(f) "Traveling message" means a message which appears to move across a variable message sign.

(g) "Variable message sign" means an outdoor advertising sign, display or device without moving parts whose message may be changed by electronic process through the use of moving or intermittent light or lights.

(3) VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS. Signs authorized under s. 84.30 (3) (c) and (e), Stats., may consist in whole or in part of a variable message sign subject to all of the following restrictions:

(a) Signs erected under s. 84.30 (3) (c), Stats., may be used only to advertise activities conducted on the property on which the signs are located or to present public service information.

(b) Signs erected under s. 84.30 (3) (e), Stats., may be used only to present public service information.

(c) No message may be displayed for less than one-half of a second.

(d) No message may be repeated at intervals of less than 2 seconds.

(e) No segmented message may last longer than 10 seconds.

(f) No traveling message may travel at a rate slower than 16 light columns per second or faster than 32 columns per second.

(g) No variable message sign lamp may be illuminated to a degree of brightness that is greater than necessary for adequate visibility. Signs found to be brighter than necessary for adequate visibility shall be adjusted by the person owning or controlling the sign in accordance with the instructions of the department.

(4) MULTIPLE MESSAGE SIGNS. Signs authorized under s. 84.30 (3) (c) and (e), Stats., may consist in whole or in part of a multiple message sign subject to all of the following restrictions:

(a) The louver rotation time to change a message shall be one second or less.

(b) The time a message remains in a fixed position shall be 6 seconds or more.

(c) During an appeal under s. 84.30 (18), Stats., or any other litigation with the department concerning a multiple message sign, the person owning or controlling the sign shall place the louvers in a fixed position and may not rotate them until a final decision has been rendered.

**Note:** A multiple message sign as defined in s. Trans 201.15 (2) (c) refers to the sign known in the outdoor advertising industry as a tri-vision sign, and a variable message sign defined in s. Trans 201.15 (2) (g) includes the device known in the outdoor advertising industry as a commercial electronic variable message sign.

**History:** Cr. Register, July, 1983, No. 331, eff. 8-1-83; r. and recr. Register, April, 1998, No. 508, eff. 5-1-98.

If we find during our periodic sign inventory that the sign does not comply with the above listed conditions a remedy would be sought which could include complete sign removal.

Also, please be advised that all other permits required by law from any other federal agency, county or municipality must be addressed.

Please visit our web site for further information:

<http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/real-estate/outdoor-adv/default.aspx>

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 608-246-7906.

Respectfully,

*Denny*

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